



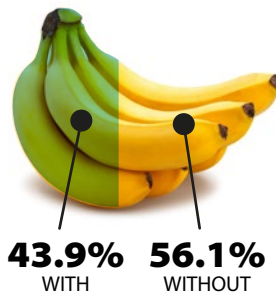
Belgian retail commitment on living wages in the banana sector

Results 2023

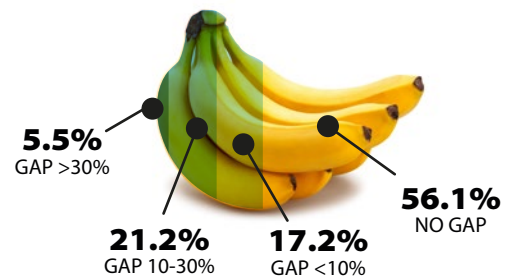
In 2022 five major retailers in Belgium, who sell approximately 70% of the bananas in the country, signed a commitment with the objective to close the living wage gap related to their banana sourcing volumes by the end of 2027. In 2023, the Belgian retailers aimed to measure the existing wage gaps of their banana producers. By building on the existing processes and efforts of German, Dutch, and UK retailers, the Belgian retailers were able to gather 2022 wage data for 92% of their banana volumes sourced from identified plantations. A more detailed analysis of the data reveals **an average living wage gap of 16.21% for 2022**.

Summary findings

Plantations
with/without living wage gap



Plantations
divided by size
of the living wage gap



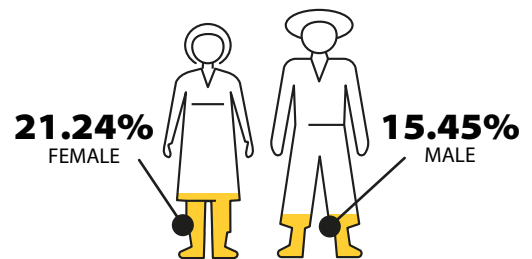
Workers
with/without living wage gap



**Male and female
workers with a
living wage gap**



**Average
living wage gap
per gender**



About the study

- The IDH Salary Matrix was used to gather the data and support the analysis of living wage gaps.
- The retailers were able to map a group of producers representing 81% of their volumes in 2022. Salary data has been gathered for 92% of these volumes.
- This study analysed information from 383 banana plantations. These are plantations with more than five workers located in Colombia, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Panama. Supermarkets in Belgium buy approximately 2,3% of the total crop that these plantations produce
- Out of the 383 plantations, 215 had no living wage gap while 168 had a gap.
- At the plantations that do have a living wage gap, the average difference between their current wage and the living wage is 16.21%.
- In 2022, 41,636 workers were employed by these plantations. The majority of these workers were male: "36,080 men versus 5,556 women".
- Of these workers 8,067 received a wage that was below the living wage. The percentage of male and female employees earning below a living wage is comparable "19.4% for male employees and 19% for female employees". However, the average living wage gap is lower for men than for women: men have an average living wage gap of 15.45% while women have an average living wage gap of 21.24%.
- We are not able at this stage to measure how many of these salary matrices have been verified through an independent third party.

Next steps

- **Qualitative and trustworthy data is crucial to take accurate decisions on closing the living wage gap.** During the coming year, supermarkets will continue to support improvements in data quality. First, by providing additional training to producers and suppliers on the Salary Matrix. Further, by performing audits on part of the living wage data, either on their own or through collective action with other European retailers. The learnings of the collective auditing activity will be shared with the certification standards that have living wage requirements with the aim to further improve the verification process. Moreover, we will explore how to measure the number of verified salary matrices.
- Now that the supermarkets have a view on the living wage gaps in their banana supply chains, they will engage with their supply chain partners to explore solutions to close the gap. **This includes - amongst other solutions - the implementation of time-bound voluntary contributions related to their volumes as an intermediate vehicle to support farmers that have living wage gaps.**
- **Responsible purchasing practices are also an important action that supermarkets can take to help close the living wage gap in their supply chains.** In 2024, a practical guide on procurement practices for living wages in the banana sector will be developed for all retailers involved in the banana commitments in the Netherlands, UK, Belgium, and Germany. Training for buying departments on this topic will also be organised.
- **Belgian retailers recognise the importance of small-scale banana farmers in their supply chain.** Smallholders are not part of this commitment since a living income approach is more adapted to their reality. However, all retailers agreed to map their volumes coming from these farmers and explore the possibility to develop a living income approach for them. In 2023 first efforts to map smallholder volumes were made. However, these were insufficient to get a complete overview of the volumes coming from these farmers. In 2024, retailers will continue this work to get a complete overview of these volumes. Further, they will start exploring a living income approach by gaining more knowledge on the topic.
- **Belgian retailers will continue working with other retailers to ensure alignment on approaches.** They will also continue the dialogue with other relevant stakeholders like producers, suppliers, certifiers, and worker unions through multistakeholder gatherings.



More information

For additional information on the Belgian retail banana commitment please visit the IDH [website](#) or contact:

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